

IN THE SPECIFICATION

Please amend the specification as follows:

On page Page 2, **please replace the paragraph** from line 4 to line 10 with the following:
Contrary to human and animal parasitic nematodes, beneficial nematodes (*Steinernematidae* and *Heterorhabditidae*) are sensitive to dessication stress and other environmental constraints (Solomon *et al.*, Nematology 1: 61-68 (1999), Kaya, Annual Review of Entomology 38: 181-206, (1993)). These nematodes are among the most promising alternatives to the chemical control of insect pests. They can actively locate, infect and kill a wide range of insect pest with the cooperation of a symbiotic bacterium (*Xenorhabdus* spp. and *Photorhabdus* spp.), and yet are safe for plants and animals.

On pages 2 and 3, **please replace the paragraph** from page 2, line 30 to page 3, line 5, with the following:

The present invention also provides a method for treating a host organism, comprising the steps of exposing the host (*e.g.*, plant or animal) to a collection of isolated mutant nematodes altered in sensitivity to desiccation stress as compared to non-mutant nematodes. In some embodiments, the mutant nematodes are altered to reduce sensitivity to desiccation stress. In some such embodiments, the nematodes comprise *Steinernematidae* or *Heterorhabditidae* nematodes. In other embodiments, the mutant nematodes are altered to increase sensitivity to desiccation stress.